

BUILDING
A WORLD
THAT WORKS
AND WORKS
FOR ALL.

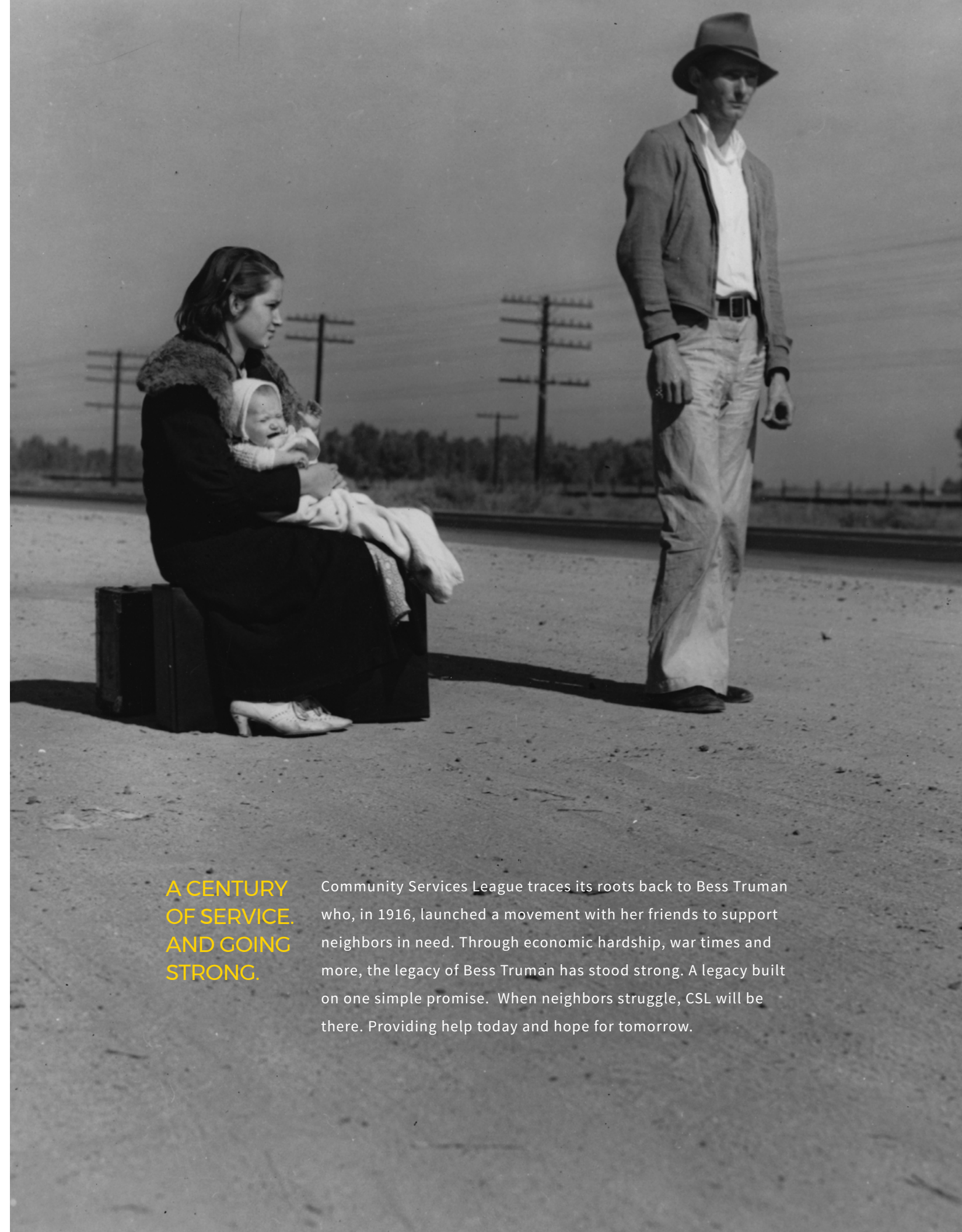




DOING WHAT SOME SAY IS IMPOSSIBLE.

Community Services League is a social services agency with broad reach and impact in the Kansas City area. We help thousands each year meet their basic life needs for food, shelter and clothing. But that's just the beginning, because CSL also connects neighbors with coaches who care and resources to build stability and provide pathways out of poverty.

It's all part of the CSL mission to build a world that works and works for all to make meaningful and lasting change in our communities. A mission with a strategic approach that addresses root causes of poverty. And pushes the boundaries of what some say is impossible.



A CENTURY OF SERVICE. AND GOING STRONG.

Community Services League traces its roots back to Bess Truman who, in 1916, launched a movement with her friends to support neighbors in need. Through economic hardship, war times and more, the legacy of Bess Truman has stood strong. A legacy built on one simple promise. When neighbors struggle, CSL will be there. Providing help today and hope for tomorrow.

TACKLING THE COMPLEX DYNAMIC OF POVERTY.

The War on Poverty was launched more than 55 years ago and today we're still engaged in the battle. It's work complicated by the complex, changing world we live in. From the pressure of technology and globalization on jobs, to the dynamic of diversity and immigration, overcoming systemic economic barriers, dealing with trauma, addiction and more. For our neighbors in poverty, it's hard to keep up – let alone get ahead. Far too often this struggle goes on, generation after generation. The question we have to answer is this: How do we break cycles of poverty for good?

IT ALL STARTS WITH UNDERSTANDING.

The problems are real. And complex. Solving them starts with understanding. Here are a few facts that illustrate the challenges:



Income inequality
Real income growth in America for the bottom 40% of households peaked in 2000 – while the top 60% continued to grow.



Housing affordability
Since 1980, median home prices have increased more than twice the rate of household income growth.



The education gap
Low income families have the highest level of student loan debt and the lowest graduation rates.



The workforce gap
The percentage of prime age males working now is lower than it was 50 years ago.

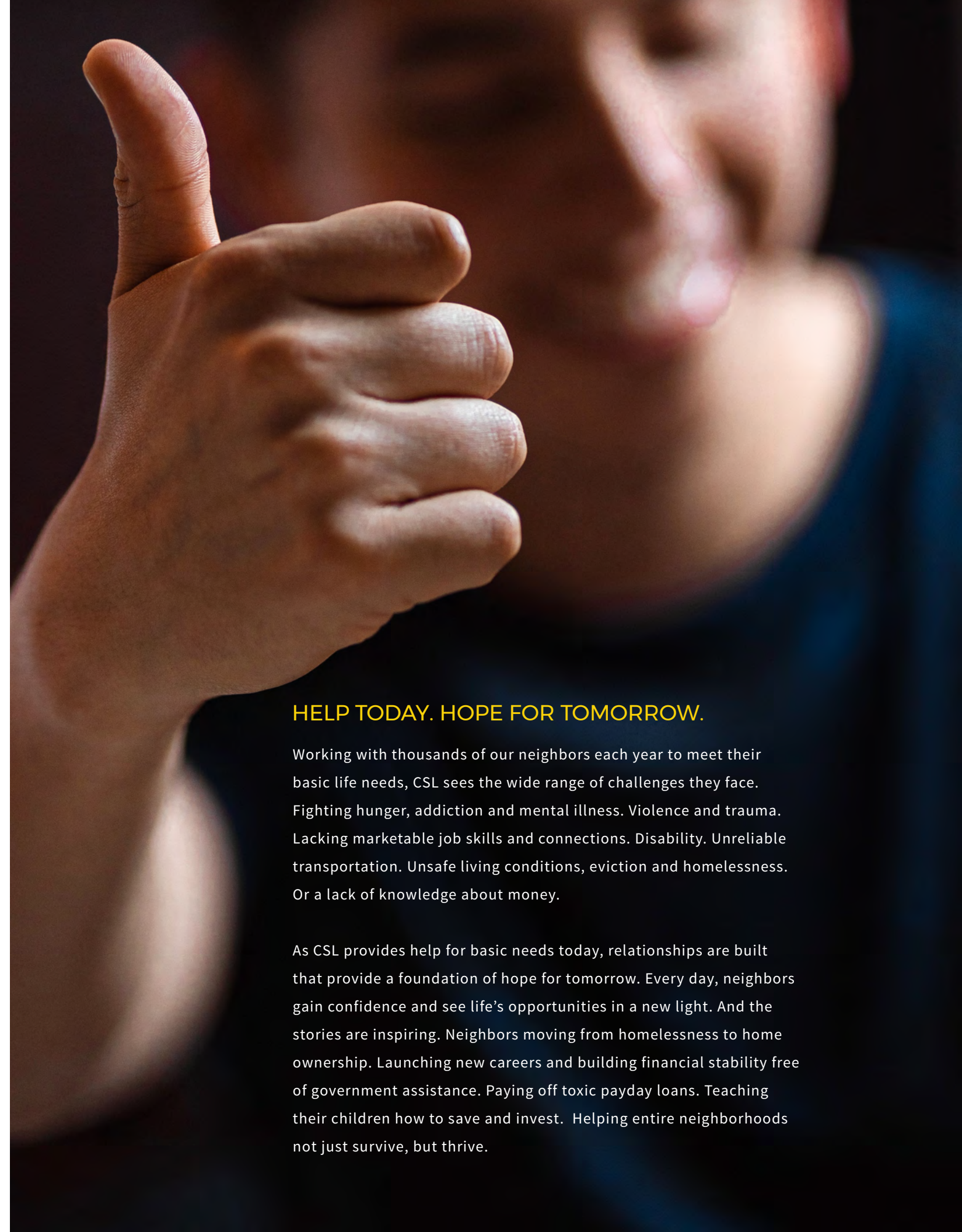


The perspective gap
Our nation's federal poverty guidelines are half of what a livable wage should be.

HELP TODAY. HOPE FOR TOMORROW.

Working with thousands of our neighbors each year to meet their basic life needs, CSL sees the wide range of challenges they face. Fighting hunger, addiction and mental illness. Violence and trauma. Lacking marketable job skills and connections. Disability. Unreliable transportation. Unsafe living conditions, eviction and homelessness. Or a lack of knowledge about money.

As CSL provides help for basic needs today, relationships are built that provide a foundation of hope for tomorrow. Every day, neighbors gain confidence and see life's opportunities in a new light. And the stories are inspiring. Neighbors moving from homelessness to home ownership. Launching new careers and building financial stability free of government assistance. Paying off toxic payday loans. Teaching their children how to save and invest. Helping entire neighborhoods not just survive, but thrive.





BUILDING PILLARS OF STABILITY.

It's easy to dismiss people in poverty as lazy or not interested in building a better life. In truth, people struggle to lift themselves out of poverty because their lives are built on a shaky foundation. For too many, life in poverty means moving from crisis to crisis, trying to create enough stability to feel hopeful about the future.

CSL helps our neighbors change their perspective with supportive relationships and resources that build life stability, giving them a solid foundation to grow and thrive. This includes access to financial coaching and programs to build assets. Training and education. Opportunities for better employment. Stable and affordable housing. Reliable transportation. Access to technology. Support to improve mental and physical wellness. And more.

7 PILLARS OF STABILITY

HOUSING
FINANCIAL
EMPLOYMENT
TRANSPORTATION
TECHNOLOGY
EDUCATION
WELLNESS

FILLING THE SOCIAL CAPITAL GAP.

Life in poverty is the result of more than just a lack of financial capital. It also stems from a lack of social capital for those struggling to get ahead in life. Social capital is the combination of all the connections we have. Connections to people who can provide know-how and experience as well as access to tools and resources that can help us overcome challenges. People in poverty often do not have these connections and relationships, making it more difficult to handle hardships.

CSL fills this gap by helping people navigate barriers, bias, and bureaucracy. With programs like Circles USA and our family stability initiative, we act as allies and mentors, providing trusted relationships that neighbors can turn to as they work to make a positive change in their lives.

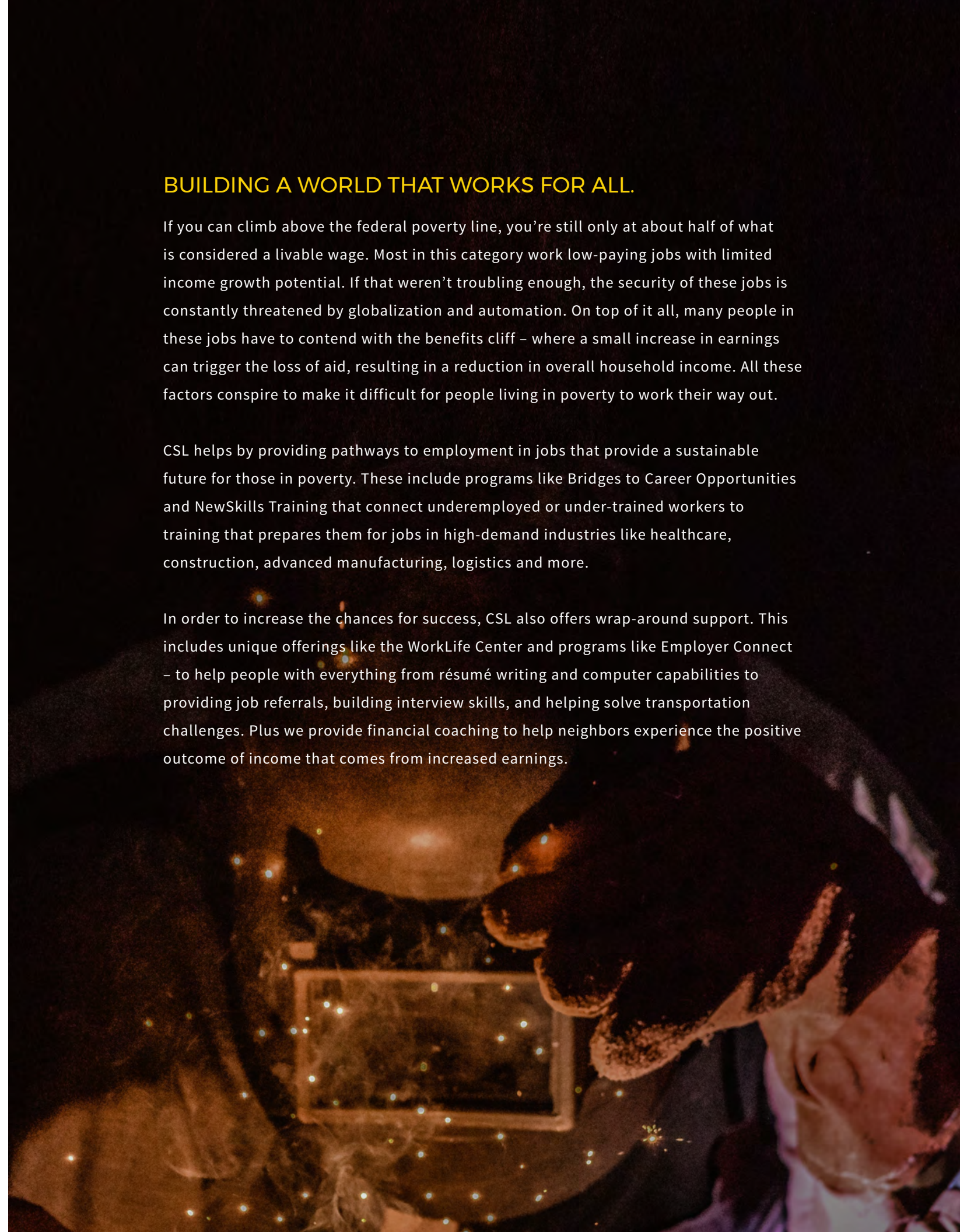


BUILDING A WORLD THAT WORKS FOR ALL.

If you can climb above the federal poverty line, you're still only at about half of what is considered a livable wage. Most in this category work low-paying jobs with limited income growth potential. If that weren't troubling enough, the security of these jobs is constantly threatened by globalization and automation. On top of it all, many people in these jobs have to contend with the benefits cliff – where a small increase in earnings can trigger the loss of aid, resulting in a reduction in overall household income. All these factors conspire to make it difficult for people living in poverty to work their way out.

CSL helps by providing pathways to employment in jobs that provide a sustainable future for those in poverty. These include programs like Bridges to Career Opportunities and NewSkills Training that connect underemployed or under-trained workers to training that prepares them for jobs in high-demand industries like healthcare, construction, advanced manufacturing, logistics and more.

In order to increase the chances for success, CSL also offers wrap-around support. This includes unique offerings like the WorkLife Center and programs like Employer Connect – to help people with everything from résumé writing and computer capabilities to providing job referrals, building interview skills, and helping solve transportation challenges. Plus we provide financial coaching to help neighbors experience the positive outcome of income that comes from increased earnings.





SERVING AS A CATALYST FOR FINANCIAL STABILITY.

As a LISC Financial Opportunity Center, CSL offers education and resources to help neighbors earn higher wages and increase their household income so they can move toward financial stability. But that's just the beginning. Because escaping the poverty mindset requires developing new ways of thinking – an area where financial coaching and education make the difference.

Through coaching, people can assess where they stand and how they can take steps to improve their financial wellbeing. Rather than being limited by the fear of losing the aid they receive, they can learn how to use the benefits as a bridge to financial stability. They can get access to affordable lending to eliminate toxic debt like payday loans. And they can get the financial knowledge to make better decisions with their money so they can improve their credit score, build their net worth and become financially self-sufficient.



NextStepKC is a CSL led initiative to provide affordable access to capital for people struggling in poverty. From breaking the cycle of toxic payday loans to targeted small dollar loan programs that address housing instability, transportation problems and other challenges that impact our neighbors every day of their lives.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITIES.

When people struggle, the communities they live in struggle, too. Neighborhoods start to deteriorate, experiencing disinvestment, a decline in quality housing, and economic isolation. With the neighborhood goes the quality of life for those who live there.

CSL is working to build community-based approaches to poverty. Because healthy communities play a vital role in helping people pull themselves up out of poverty. That means promoting dialogue about the real challenges these neighborhoods face. And bringing new programs and partnerships together to improve community economics – one family, one neighborhood at a time.

Additionally, CSL is deploying dynamic ideas to help drive innovation. Building alliances and partnerships to help break down silos, and encourage cross-sector collaboration – all with the goal of making it easy for people to engage in opportunities to make their lives better.

This approach identifies the systemic challenges, uncovers ways to deploy resources more strategically, and finds ways to improve the collective impact. It is an approach that has given birth to innovations like BlendWell Community Cafe and the WorkLife Center. Innovations that give hope to communities that are struggling. And, in turn, give hope to all those who call that community home.



JOIN US AND LET'S MAKE MEANINGFUL CHANGE.

To build a world that works and works for all it takes resources - invested strategically and collaboratively to deliver scalable solutions that drive impact.

Help fund the effort today. With your support, we can give our neighbors what they need to lift themselves out of poverty. And as a result, spark a movement of meaningful and lasting change that ripples out into our communities.

Thank you in advance for partnering with CSL to create a world that works and works for all.





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